

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 3092

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS TO PEKING

SUMMARY. NEW SOCIALIST CHAIRMAN ASUKATA WILL VISIT PEKING
IN MARCH. BY SELECTING CHINA FOR HIS FIRST FOREIGN VISIT,
ASUKATA IS RISKING CRITICISM FROM PARTY'S LARGE PRO-MOSCOW
WING, BUT PARTY MODERATES SAY HE IS ONLY TRYING TO
IMPLEMENT POLICY OF BALANCED DIPLOMACY. END SUMMARY.

1. ON FEB. 23, JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE APPROVED REQUEST OF ICHIO ASUKATA, NEWLY ELECTED
PARTY CHAIRMAN, TO VISIT CHINA IN MARCH. SCHEDULE NOT YET
DECIDED BUT PARTY HOPES ASUKATA CAN MAKE TRIP AFTER END OF
JSP CONVENTION MARCH 16 AND BEFORE RUMORED (BUT UNLIKELY)
PEKING TRIP BY FONMIN SONODA IN LATE MARCH. ASUKATA PLANS TO
MEET WITH CHAIRMAN HUA BUT TOPICS THEY WILL DISCUSS HAVE NOT
BEEN DECIDED.

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2. COMMENT: TIMING OF TRIP HAS IMPLICATIONS WHICH GO
BEYOND JSP'S OBVIOUS DESIRE TO ATTRACT AS MUCH LIMELIGHT
AS POSSIBLE ON PEKING STAGE WHILE CANDLEPOWER FROM
MEDIA'S FOCUS ON PFT TALKS IS STILL HIGH. BY GOING
TO PEKING ON HIS FIRST OVERSEAS TRIP, ASUKATA HAS
GIVEN AMMUNITION TO THOSE IN PARTY WHO SAY HE IS

PRO PEKING. ASUKATA CAME TO POWER BECAUSE HE WAS ONLY FIGURE IN PARTY ACCEPTABLE TO ITS MAJOR FACTIONAL RIVALS, INCLUDING HARD-CORE LEFT, WHICH IS STRONGLY PRO-MOSCOW. HIS VISIT TO PEKING IS BEING INTERPRETED AS IMPORTANT MOVE AWAY FROM LEFT TOWARDS MODERATES. SOME BUT NOT ALL OF WHOM CURRENTLY TAGGED AS PRO-PEKING YET WHEN EMBOFF QUERIED JSP INTERNATIONAL BUREAU CHIEF KAWAKAMI, HIMSELF MODERATE, ABOUT RECENT PRESS REPORTS THAT PARTY WAS GOING FROM MOSCOW ORIENTATION TO PEKING ONE, DENIAL WAS VEHEMENT. PRO-PEKING ELEMENTS HAVE ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT WHILE THEY WISHED ALLEGED SINOPHILIA WERE TRUE, IT WAS NOT. THEY SEE ASUKATA MERELY TRYING TO CORRECT PARTY'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS BALANCE WITH LONG OVERDUE FRIENDLY GESTURE TOWARD PEKING. (ASUKATA HAS TOLD US THAT HE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO VISIT U.S. SOMETIME THIS YEAR, WHEN TIME PERMITS.)

3. BALANCED INTERNATIONAL STANCE IS, WE NOTE, ONE OF FOUR THEMES IN JUST-RELEASED DRAFT OF JSP'S POLICY PLAN FOR 1978. DRAFT WILL BE DEBATED AT PARTY CONVENTION AND WE EXPECT THAT VOCIFEROUS LEFT-WING DELEGATES WILL DO THEIR BEST TO PULL ASUKATA BACK TOWARD THEIR PRO-MOSCOW LINE.

MANSFIELD

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